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ABSTRACT

The guide presents a model for helping parents of handicapped children and professionals work together. The Project Bridge model calls for parents and professionals to act as a team in delivering a workshop for other parents and educators. Aspects of planning the workshop, including choice of location, publicity, and cost questions are reviewed. The bulk of the document is composed of the workshop curriculum which is laid out in activity descriptions with suggestions for preparing for each activity. Activity descriptions include the goal, procedures, training tips, and things to remember. Among activities described are the welcome and introductions, goal sharing, identification of concerns and common problems, and parent and educator teamwork. Case studies are included as opportunities for joint problem solving. A final section is a guide for facilitators, with information about grouping and organizing the activities and suggestions for planning and rehearsing the workshop. Included in 13 appendixes are sample registration forms, a sample agenda, and sample case study solutions. (CL)

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THE BRIDGE MODEL:

A New Approach to Help Build Parent-Educator Teams For Handicapped Children

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THE BRIDGE MODEL

If you are a parent of a handicapped child, or a professional who works with handicapped children, this guide is meant for you. It is for each of us who has been faced with difficulties such as:

- Trying to schedule meeting times that are convenient for both parent and teacher;
- Wanting to keep in touch with each other on a regular basis, but never finding the time to communicate because of daily pressures on the job and at home;
- Feeling uneasy at parent-teacher conferences because you don't understand the words being used to describe your child's progress;
- Feeling that some of your students' parents put too much of the responsibility in your lap.

Parents and educators really want to work together more effectively for the benefit of children with handicaps. But their big question is..."How?" Frustrations like the ones we have listed seem to get in the way. And far too often they build up into obstacles that are extremely difficult to overcome.

The Parents' Campaign for Handicapped Children and Youth and The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) have heard these concerns voiced again and again throughout the country. That's why they decided to pool their energies in a common effort that would help parents and teachers:

- Understand the burdens and pressures each faces that tend to get in the way of fruitful communication;
- Develop confidence in their ability to work with one another on an equal basis;
- Experience the benefits of a give-and-take relationship.

The result of the Parents' Campaign-CEC collaboration is the BRIDGE MODEL...a unique program that starts with a team of parents and educators who work together toward the delivery of a workshop for other parents and educators. The workshop is a fast moving, participant-centered experience which helps parents and educators to:

- Identify issues that cause problems in cooperation;
- Focus on areas of major concern;
- Work together to develop ways to solve problems.

The U.S. Department of Education provided funding for two years--from 1981 to 1983--to develop, test, and distribute the Bridge Model. The two sponsoring organizations of the project offered unique perspectives for

this undertaking: The Parents' Campaign is nationally known for its operation of the Closer Look Information Center, which for more than ten years has responded to the needs of thousands of parents seeking services and resources for handicapped children. CEC is the foremost international association of special educators, and has played a leadership role in the development of quality educational services for all exceptional children.

The two organizations joined forces and brought local parent and professional groups together to test the model in Atlanta, Georgia; Miami, Florida; Burlington, Vermont; and twice in Washington, D.C., once with Black families and the second time with Hispanic families. Local teams worked together every step of the way to plan for and conduct the workshops and to provide support afterwards. Each time it was tested, workshop facilitators and participants made suggestions for improvement which were immediately incorporated. The activities you see in this guide are refined versions of activities that more than 150 participants and 25 facilitators in five areas have helped to revise. We gratefully acknowledge their assistance and hope that you will agree that their work will ultimately make a difference in the education of handicapped children.

Most of all, we invite you to awaken the interest of others so that they will work with you to organize and conduct a Bridge workshop. All of the tasks toward this end are described in the following pages. We offer easy-to-follow suggestions and strategies that other groups have tried.

We know you'll feel satisfied with your efforts. Here's what workshop participants have said about the Bridge workshop:

- "A very meaningful workshop; I realized that parent-teacher problems and concerns are not really very different."
- "I learned new ways to deal with old problems...things that are very helpful to me and my child."
- "I didn't know a workshop gathering that lasted all day could be so interesting and so much fun."
- "This workshop renewed many of my own convictions and encouraged me to put renewed energies toward communication with the parents of my students."

The workshop was a new frontier for many participants. People learned better ways to communicate with one another--and went on to use these understandings to strengthen their relationships through more open and honest exchange. The greatest reward of all is measured in lives of children who have special needs and need extra help to realize their potential.

PLANNING FOR A BRIDGE WORKSHOP: SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What's the Workshop All About?

The Bridge workshop is an extremely effective way to build stronger parent-educator relationships. It does not rely on traditional workshop techniques, such as panel discussions and speeches. Rather, it encourages participation so that each person's experiences become the basis for new understanding. Workshop activities are structured to develop a climate of mutual trust and respect and maximize opportunities for open exchange of information, ideas and feelings; each person's contributions serve as a valuable resource for learning.

The curriculum for the workshop can be used in any community, and is designed to bring out the real issues that parents and educators face. This gives participants the opportunity to examine specific barriers to cooperation that exist between parents and educators, focusing on pressures and constraints that they themselves feel. As the workshop progresses, participants hear others express frustrations similar to their own and realize that parents and educators share common concerns, problems and needs. With this new awareness, each group becomes more understanding of the other's point of view, more motivated to provide mutual support, and strengthenend in their ability to work together for the benefit of handicapped children.

I think I'd Like to Try This Workshop Out, But How Do I Get Started?

Getting ready for this workshop involves many of the same steps that you would take in planning for any other workshop, seminar, or important meeting. The ingredient that makes it unique and exciting is that all of the preparation is jointly carried out by a team of parents and educators.

From the beginning, everyone has a first hand opportunity to experience the satisfactions that flow from sharing effort and knowledge to reach a common goal. Equally important, during the workshop, participants observe a parent-educator team in action, and witness the positive results of open communication and cooperation.

The first step in your effort to bridge the gap between parents and educators is to set an example of the very relationship you are trying to promote. This is why it is important that both a parent and an educator share the responsibility for leading the planning group--as co-coordinators. The two become examples of the central message of the workshop--that parents and educators can work together. Your planning group, a mix of parents and educators, will further illustrate that your goal is reachable and worthwhile.

You probably already have someone in mind with whom you'd like to divide the job of coordinating the planning activities. He or she is most likely to be a person whom you respect--possibly one of your child's teachers who has been especially supportive, or a parent who has volunteered his or her time to help in your classroom.

Once the two of you get together, discuss other capable and dependable parents and educators to invite as planning group members. The number of people you ask will depend on your own judgement as well as the amount of time you can realistically devote to this effort.

Our experience indicates that a planning group of six to eight members works well. That way, no one is burdened with too many tasks, yet the group is small enough to make it easy for people to get to know each other and work efficiently. Recruiting those people--a good balance of both parents and educators--is your second step.

Finally, invite the planning group to sit down together to discuss the workshop, and set the wheels in motion. Hold the meeting as soon as possible after you have invited your members. This will get the momentum going while enthusiasm is high.

What follows is a review of the type of information you will need to cover at planning meetings.

What Do We Need To Do To Prepare for a Successful Workshop?

Select a Date

In order to accomplish all the planning tasks involved, begin well in advance of the workshop day. Give yourselves about three to four months from your first planning meeting to the day of the workshop. Some important considerations for selecting a date are:

- Day of the week--is a weekday possible? If not, a Saturday is best.
- Community events and holidays--AVOID conflicting with these; check calendars for local sporting events, special programs, etc.
- Time of year--for example, the days between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day are usually full of other pressing events which make it difficult for people to attend a workshop.

Recruit Participants

Recruiting participants is one of the major tasks to accomplish during the planning stage. The number of people you invite is not as important as taking steps to make sure that there will be as close to an equal number of parents and educators as possible. This prevents feelings of being outnumbered--the sense of being faced by "all those parents" or "all those professionals." Just as important, a balanced group promotes sharing of ideas and feelings.

The Bridge workshop was originally designed for 30 participants, half parents and half educators. However, we have found it to be just as effective with as few as 15 people and as many as 40.

There are many strategies you can use to reach potential workshop participants. Add your own ideas to these:

- Call people you know to collect names of parents and teachers who should be invited.
- Get in touch with leaders of community organizations and parent groups such as local chapters of the Association for Retarded Citizens, the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, church groups or local recreation programs for families of handicapped children.
- Let educators know about your plans by sending flyers or other announcements to professional organizations like local chapters of The Council for Exceptional Children and the National Education Association. (Brief announcements at meetings or in newsletters will get the word out.)
- Talk to PTA groups at individual schools.
- Speak to school administrators, counselors, social workers and others to inform them about your workshop and ask for names of parents and educators to contact.
- Ask planning group members to recruit 4 or 5 members each.
- Write short but compelling announcements for local newsletters, telling interested people whom they should contact.
- Ask each person you invite to recommend a friend who might also be interested in attending.
- OVER-INVITE! Anticipate the kinds of problems we all have, and assume that 10% to 15% of those who plan to attend will not be able to make it.
- Keep records. Keep a list of names of all potential participants, including their addresses and phone numbers.
- Get commitments. Make sure you know the number of participants who will be attending at least 3 weeks prior to the workshop.
- USE REMINDERS. Make calls or send postcards a few days before the event to all participants notifying them again of the date, time and location. Even people who have a high interest and the best of intentions may forget things at times.

Think of Incentives

While members of your community will undoubtedly express enthusiasm about such a worthwhile workshop, there are realities that can make it difficult for people to attend an all-day event. It's a good idea to

anticipate some of the needs participants may have and think of creative ways to meet them. Here are some incentives to attendance that Bridge teams have developed.

- Daycare. Many parents simply cannot come unless daycare is available during the time they will be at the workshop. Ask one or two capable high school or college students to donate their services; arrange for a room near your workshop that can be child-proofed. Or, ask for volunteers from a local scout troup or see if a child care or home economics teacher will give extra credit for students who assist. Let participants know what you have arranged.

- Transportation. Arrange carpools or try for a school bus to transport workshop participants. Be sure to provide clear maps, noting how to reach public transportation, if appropriate. Post signs near the building where the workshop is being held--and on the door, if possible. The location may be new to some participants, and you want them to arrive calm and unfrazzled.

- Certificates. Give certificates of participation to all who attend. A high school art class can design and produce suitable-for-framing documents. Or a local printer may be willing to run them off (and get credit in the local newspaper write-up of the event).

- Letters of Recognition. Write a letter to supervisors, commending educators for their voluntary participation to improve communication and cooperation between parents and professionals. If any parents need to take leave from work in order to attend the workshop, let them know that you would be happy to write a letter to their employer, explaining the importance of participation. (And be sure to send a thank-you letter following the workshop.)

- Academic Credit. It may be possible for a local educational institution to provide inservice or continuing education unit credits for participants. Find out if this can be arranged.

- Lunch and Snacks. Everybody enjoys a free lunch. That can add an extra touch of hospitality to the day.

- Publicity. People will sometimes make a greater effort to participate in an event that has been well publicized. Get in touch with local or neighborhood newspapers to interest them in publishing an article about the workshop. You might sell the paper on the idea of an interview with a school or parent leader. Afterwards, try to get a story published including names of participants--with some enthusiastic quotes.

Don't forget to tell people about the special arrangements you've made. Mention things like the availability of daycare, a free luch, or whatever you're offering.

Choose a Location

A convenient location will help you attract participants; pleasant accommodations will add to everyone's enjoyment of the day. Here are some other things to consider:

- Size of Rooms. Many of the activities in the workshop are designed for participants to work in small groups. A large room with moveable furniture or two adjacent rooms allows group members to talk among themselves without disturbing others. If possible, a separate room should be arranged for the lunch break to have a change of scenery.

- Necessities. Restrooms and a conveniently located telephone should be considered. If you're holding the workshop on a day the building is normally closed, will the heating or air conditioning system be operating?

- Special Considerations. Be sure to know the needs of your participants in advance. Will you need a building that is accessible to someone with a physical disability? How about sign language interpreters, foreign language translators, etc.?

- Courtesy. Make it easy to find the workshop room. Posters and arrows in the building are a big help. One facilitator can check the entrance until curtain time.

- Cost. All Bridge pilot teams found comfortable, conveniently located facilities at either no cost or just a nominal custodial fee. Workshops have been held in schools, churches, libraries, community centers, on college campuses and even in a museum. In each case, the person contacted was told that the workshop was a public service event which would benefit the community. Tap your community resources and use your charisma!

Arrange for Food

Providing coffee and donuts in the morning is optional, but it's a warm welcome and gives people a chance to meet each other in a relaxed way while waiting for everyone to arrive.

It is highly recommended that participants have lunch together at the workshop site. Some ideas are:

- Ask participants to bring a bag lunch (you might want to provide beverages).

- Ask local merchants or organizations to donate money or prepare a simple lunch. (Don't forget to include the number of children and daycare helpers to your final count.)

- Charge a nominal fee to participants and bring in sandwiches from a nearby carry-out.

- Your organization or a local scout troup or service group can prepare a "pot luck" lunch and raise money selling meal tickets.

Locate Materials

Only a limited amount of materials are needed throughout the day. These include large sheets of newsprint (flipchart paper), large marking pens (magic markers), masking tape and name tags. We'll tell you more about this in the Guide for Facilitators section.

Plan Publicity

This isn't a "must"--but can be very helpful in recruitment efforts as mentioned earlier. If follow-up publicity is possible, it will give you and your participants well deserved recognition for hard work. It also gives you a chance to talk about needs of handicapped children and the importance of parent-professional teamwork.

Here are some suggested sources of publicity to look into:

- Community or organization newsletters
- Local papers
- School bulletins
- PTA flyers
- Original flyers displayed in supermarkets, libraries, schools, etc.
- Community radio talk shows
- Public service announcements on radio and T.V.

How Do I Divide the Workload?

The tasks listed above are not difficult, but they do take time. If you divide them up among members of your planning group (based upon each person's interest, experience and available time), they can be handled more easily and efficiently.

You may get commitments from some people to undertake specific responsibilities even before you get to the first planning meeting. Or, as is usually the case, you can ask individual members of the group to take on certain tasks after you've had a chance to talk about the purposes and benefits of the workshop.

Here are some points to keep in mind as you and your co-coordinators get your group organized:

- Don't let one person volunteer for too many tasks (he or she may feel overloaded in the end).

- A real spirit of teamwork can emerge when a couple of people share the responsibility for one task.

- Look at the amount of work involved in each task carefully and make sure you have an adequate number of people working on it together. (Recruitment, for example, takes time, and the more heads you put together to think of strategies, the more creative ideas will be generated.)

- Ask people to be realistic in estimating how much time they will need to get a task done. Ask that they choose a target date for completion. Check to see if they'll need assistance.

- It's a good idea to keep a list of each task, who will be responsible for it and the date each person expects to complete his or her jobs. Check with them as the date draws near and perhaps earlier to help with possible snags.

- Try to make sure people feel at ease about calling you, or your co-coordinator, if they run into difficulties. (Remember... the "unpredictable" and the "unanticipated" can happen!)

- Keep everyone informed of what other people are doing so that each person feels a part of the whole. Make personal calls, set up a telephone chain or send out minutes of your meetings.

- Don't forget to acknowledge what people do to make the workshop a success. Be generous with your thanks. It's especially appropriate to express your appreciation at meetings of the planning team.

How Much Will it Cost to Produce the Workshop?

Only a small outlay of money is needed to produce this workshop. The major investment you'll need to make is time and energy. Dollars-and-cents costs will depend upon your ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Bridge teams have found out they can acquire, without cost, just about every item or service required to produce this workshop (and there aren't many to begin with). This includes xeroxing, meeting facilities, and daycare services. In some communities, paper, markers, and other materials have been donated by schools, in other places local merchants have provided free box lunches. Notify people in your school system and business community about the event. The more they understand what you're doing, the more likely they'll be to contribute toward the venture's success.

Even if you choose not to seek donations, our experiences have shown us that this workshop can be produced for as little as $25 to cover such costs as materials and postage--a $25 investment with a very high return!

Who Conducts the Bridge Workshop?

Members of your planning group do! But, don't get nervous, it's fun and it's rewarding. There are no speeches to give; no special knowledge of subject matter needed. As a matter of fact, the participants do most of the work. The facilitators set the atmosphere and use this guide to steer their colleagues and peers through the activities so participants can learn from each other. When parents and professionals are assisted in building their relationships by a team of peers that has already established that connection, the impact is deep and enduring.

Keep in mind that no one person needs to shoulder all of the responsibility. Facilitating the workshop is a group effort. Different people can lead each activity, and two can work together in leading specific activities. For these reasons, four to six facilitators taking turns throughout the day works out well.

There is an entire section in this guide containing tips and hints to help make the facilitators' job an easy and enjoyable experience.

Rehearsing for the Big Day

The final step in your planning phase is to have all the facilitators "walk" through the curriculum. Do this at least twice, a couple of weeks before the workshop. Even though they will have already read their own copies of the curriculum and training tips, everyone will need to get together to figure out the "choreography"--to decide who will lead each activity, how groups will be seated, to practice lines, etc.

Ask facilitators to read the next two sections of this guide very carefully before you meet; the curriculum tells you <u>what</u> to do, but the Guide for Facilitators section tells you <u>how</u> to do it smoothly.

One Final Word

Take a good look at the nature and needs of your community--before deciding how to notify and attract participants and what recruitment methods to use. For instance:

- From what source do most people usually get information like this (local newspapers, churches, community centers, schools).
- Are there "influential" people in the community who would be helpful in getting the word out? Who do people respect and respond to favorably?
- What would be the most effective way to communicate with potential workshop participants? What would get the best response (mail, phone calls, home visits, announcements)?

- Is there a particular facility at which people would feel most "at home"? The willingness to participate may depend on where you hold your workshop.

- The golden rule for presenting a successful workshop is to put yourself in the shoes of the people you're trying to reach and tailor all of your efforts with their perspective in mind.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE:

10 EASY STEPS FOR PLANNING

TASKS	HOW MANY MONTHS BEFORE THE WORKSHOP YOU SHOULD BEGIN
1. Select a co-coordinator	4 months
2. Select planning group members • Select facilitators for the workshop	3 1/2 months • 2 months
3. Begin holding meetings	3 months
4. Select a date for the workshop (pg 4)	3 months
5. Begin recruitment (pg 4)	3 months
• Identify potential participants	• 3 months
• Develop and distribute announcements and publicity	• 2 1/2 months
• Determine incentives	• 3 months
• Obtain commitment from participants	• 3 weeks
• Follow-up with reminders	• 1 week
6. Choose a location (pg 7)	3 months
7. Arrange for food (pg 7)	1 months
8. Assemble materials (pg 62)	3 weeks
9. Facilitators hold meetings to prepare for the workshop	2 weeks
10. Follow-up publicity	Following workshop

TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #1

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE TWO PEOPLE TO WELCOME PARTICIPANTS AND DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP.

PARENT _____ EDUCATOR _____

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

NONE

SETTING THE STAGE

FIVE TABLES, WITH SIX CHAIRS EACH SHOULD BE SET UP AROUND THE ROOM (FOR 30 PARTICIPANTS). ARRANGE THEM IN A SEMI-CIRCLE OR OTHER CASUAL WAY, BUT MAKE SURE THERE IS ENOUGH ROOM TO MOVE EASILY BETWEEN THEM. FACILITATORS MAY WANT A TABLE OF THEIR OWN IN THE FRONT OF THE ROOM AND EXTRA CHAIRS MAY BE SET UP AROUND THE ROOM FOR FACILITATORS TO USE IF THEY ARE NOT INVOLVED IN AN ACTIVITY. PARTICIPANTS MAY SEAT THEMSELVES AT ANY OF THE TABLES IN THE ROOM.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 2?

Time: 15 Minutes

ACTIVITY I: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO SET THE TONE FOR THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES AND TO CLARIFY WHAT IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

In A Nutshell: Facilitators welcome participants and give a brief overview of the purposes and goal of the workshop. (All facilitators introduce themselves.)

How To Do It:

Steps

1. Welcome participants and briefly describe the purposes of the workshop which should include these three ideas:
   - To enhance cooperative relationships between parents and educators;
   - To communicate with one another about problems of common concern;
   - To have the opportunity to work together on finding solutions.
2. Discuss the style of the workshop (informal, relaxed, no speeches) and types of exercises that will be carried out, so that participants will be reassured that no activity will make them feel uncomfortable.
3. Explain logistics (location of restrooms, special concerns such as smoking, lunch arrangments, etc.).
4. All facilitators then introduce themselves by giving a brief explanation about their own experiences with exceptional children.

Training Tips:

- From the beginning, use first names of all participants and facilitators. This helps to foster an informal and relaxed atmosphere.
- Parent/teacher teamwork needs to be demonstrated from the very beginning and constantly reinforced. For this reason, it is important that both a parent and a teacher be in front of the room sharing responsibility for this activity. One person can cover Step 1 and the other can carry out Steps 2

and 3. Decide beforehand which parts each of you would feel most comfortable with. (All facilitators participate in Step 4.)

Take Note:

- Remember that as you open the day, you are setting a tone. The style of this workshop is different from what most people are used to; it is relaxed, informal, and encourages a lot of give-and-take of ideas. Do whatever you can to convey this message: by what you say and how you act. Some ideas are:

  - Address each other and all of the facilitators by their first names;
  - Ask participants if they'd like to rearrange the seating;
  - Be casual, ask other facilitators at the end if there was some detail about logistics that you might have forgotten to explain.

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES

TIME BREAKDOWN
INTRODUCTION: 5 MIN.
PARTICIPANT INTRO: 10 MIN.
REPORTING: 25 MIN.

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #2

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE ONE PERSON TO INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY AND ONE TO FACILITATE LARGE GROUP INTRODUCTIONS.

PARENT _____ EDUCATOR _____

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

NONE

SETTING THE STAGE

TOTAL GROUP SEATED AT TABLES. AFTER THE INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITY IS GIVEN, PARTICIPANTS GET UP AND CHOOSE A PARTNER.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 3?

TIME: 40 Minutes

ACTIVITY 2: PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN AN INFORMAL WAY AND TO PRACTICE A SKILL VERY BASIC TO GOOD COMMUNICATION: LISTENING.

In a Nutshell: Participants introduce themselves to one other person; they then introduce one another to total group.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"Now that you know who we are, we'd like to take some time for everyone to know each other. We'd like to do this in a relaxed and enjoyable way. It's really pretty simple, but let me explain it first and make sure everyone understands the idea before we get started."

Steps

1. Ask each person to get up and find someone in the room whom they don't already know and choose a part of the room where they can talk comfortably. Participants will form teams of two for purposes of this activity.
2. Participants will start a conversation by a simple name introduction and then share three facts about themselves. These facts can include a favorite hobby, an interesting experience, their job or family. Allow enough time for both partners to participate.
3. Participants will return to their seats after the ten minute period.
4. Start at one table and ask partners of each team to introduce each other to the whole group. Explain that you want them to share some interesting things they learned about the other person.

Training Tips:

- Make sure all directions are given and understood BEFORE participants actually begin activity.

- You might want to give an example by first sharing three facts about yourself to the whole group--two "serious" and one light one might help to explain the task and remove some anxiety.

- If you have an unequal number of participants, facilitators can serve as partners.

- If too many people already know one another, ask them to go through the exercise with anyone, trying to think of new things to tell each other.

- Check with the total group after about five minutes, to see if people are almost ready. Encourage the group to finish up quickly. If it seems that the majority are not nearly finished, extend the time by a minute or so.

- When participants return to their seats for reporting, ask for a volunteer to begin. If no one volunteers, ask a specific person if he or she would be willing to start. Then continue around that table.

- Partners will probably not be sitting near each other when they return to their seats. As people introduce their partner by name, ask that the partner raise his or her hand so that everyone knows who is being introduced. Ask the partner to follow with his or her introduction before moving on to another team.

- It is important that after each introduction, a facilitator consistently acknowledge either the person who made the introduction with a simple thank you or welcomes the one who was introduced.

Take Note:

- One objective of this activity is to help people start talking with one another and begin to feel relaxed. The method presented here has been used successfully many times. However, there are other activites that can achieve the same results. If you are familiar with another activity you would prefer to use, please do! (See Guide for Facilitators, page 63, for another suggestion.)

TOTAL TIME: 5 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #3

GOAL SHARING

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE A PERSON TO DESCRIBE THE GOALS.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

1 PIECE OF FLIPCHART PAPER
MAGIC MARKERS
TAPE

FLIPCHART SAYS: "WORKSHOP GOALS:

- TO IDENTIFY ISSUES THAT CAUSE BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND EDUCATORS.
- TO DISCUSS AREAS OF COMMON CONCERNS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPS.
- TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP WAYS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS."

SETTING THE STAGE

TOTAL GROUP IS SEATED AT TABLES.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 4?

Time: 5 Minutes

ACTIVITY 3: GOAL SHARING

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO GIVE PARTICIPANTS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT FROM THE WORKSHOP.

In a Nutshell: Facilitator explains the three major goals of the workshop and gives participants a chance to think about them and discuss them...to begin to feel that they themselves are contributing to this learning experience--not acting merely as spectators.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"We've all come today to explore ways to improve collaboration between parents and teachers. I'd like to take a minute to explain more clearly why we are here and what we'll be doing."

Steps

1. Display and explain goals that are written on flipchart paper. They are:
   - To identify issues that cause barriers to communication and cooperation between parents and educators.
   - To discuss areas of common concern in order to improve programs and services for children with handicaps.
   - To work together to develop ways to solve problems.
2. Ask participants if they have any questions or comments.

Training Tips:

- These goals are so general that participants most likely will be satisfied. It's most important, however, to ask the last question so they really feel a part of the day.
- Listen to any questions carefully. If someone asks something like, "Will we have a chance to work on specific problems in our school?" you could say that "you'll have a chance to deal with specific areas of concern this afternoon" (see Activity 9).

- If someone raises a question about wanting to cover something that you know is not within the scope of this workshop, be honest. Let them know that six hours is not long enough to cover everything, but that perhaps you can discuss other concerns during lunch or after the workshop.

- Write the goals on flipchart paper in advance of the workshop; be sure the handwriting is clear and easy to read.

- Post the flipchart paper in front of the room as you are explaining the goals. When you have completed Activity 3, move the paper to another wall in the room so that the goals don't remain the "center of attention" yet are available to be read throughout the day.

Take Note:

- Sharing the goals for the day gives participants a chance to know what they can expect to happen. People begin to feel oriented and excited about what they'll be doing. After the goals are shared, participants feel prepared and ready to go!

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

TIME BREAKDOWN
INTRODUCTION: 5 MIN.
GROUP WORK: 25 MIN.

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #4

IDENTIFYING CONCERNS: THINGS WE DO AND DON'T DO

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE A PERSON TO INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

CHOOSE FACILITATORS FOR SMALL GROUPS.

GROUP #I _____ GROUP #I _____
PARENT EDUCATOR

GROUP #2 _____ GROUP #2 _____
PARENT EDUCATOR

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

9 PIECES OF FLIPCHART PAPER
4 MAGIC MARKERS
TAPE

4 FLIPCHARTS WITH HEADING	"THINGS I/WE DO OR FEEL THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION."
4 FLIPCHARTS WITH HEADING	"THINGS I/WE DO OR FEEL THAT HELP(S) COMMUNICATION."
I FLIPCHART	DISPLAYED WITH NAMES OF FACILITATORS AND MEMBERS OF EACH GROUP BELOW.

SETTING THE STAGE

PARTICIPANTS FORM 4 GROUPS (2 EDUCATOR AND 2 PARENT). GROUPS ARE SEATED IN SEPARATE AREAS OF THE ROOM, OR SEPARATE ROOMS, TO ALLOW FOR OPTIMAL DISCUSSION AND MINIMAL DISTRACTION. PARTICIPANTS CAN CARRY THEIR CHAIRS TO FORM GROUPS, IF DESIRED, AS TABLES ARE NOT NECESSARY.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 5?

Time: 30 Minutes

ACTIVITY 4: IDENTIFYING CONCERNS: THINGS WE DO AND DON'T DO

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS AND FEELINGS THAT ARE BARRIERS TO COOPERATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND EDUCATORS.

In A Nutshell: Participants divide into small groups: two composed only of professionals, two only of parents. They come up with two lists of behaviors. One with behaviors or feelings that cause problems in communication and the other with behaviors or feelings that help communication between parents and educators.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"We all recognize that we sometimes have attitudes or do certain things that keep us from working together in the best manner. It isn't planned or deliberate, but does cause problems. During this activity we will discuss things we do or feel, as individuals, that prevent us from working together effectively to help children. Please feel free to say anything that comes to mind, in other words, brainstorm! You will have a chance in a few minutes to review your lists and eliminate duplications."

Steps

1. Ask participants to move into four groups: two consisting of parents and two of educators. It is very helpful to decide how this will be done before the workshop and to display names of group members on flipchart. If possible, it's best if parent facilitators assist the parent groups and educators facilitate each group of educators.

2. Each group will have two pieces of flipchart paper in front of them; one entitled "Things I/We Do or Feel That Cause Problems in Communication," the other, "Things I/We Do or Feel That Help(s) Communication." Ask participants to think of examples from their own experiences (actions or feelings) that would satisfy these statements.*

*Parents should only discuss their own behaviors and feelings--not those of educators, and vise versa. This isn't a "blaming" session.

3 It usually works well to go around the group and ask each person to contribute a thought. It's okay to let a participant pass at first and contribute on the next round.

4 Facilitator records each response on flipchart. (You may have to abbreviate the statement a little, but ask the participant if what you are writing is just what he or she had in mind.)

5 Begin with the "...Cause Problems..." list first. Spend about 15 minutes.

6 Then spend about 10 minutes on the "...Help..." list.

7 When each group has completed their list, ask both parent groups to form one large group and ask both educator groups to do the same. This is in preparation for Activity 5.

Training Tips:

- Facilitators can start the activity by giving an example, like: "I don't take the time to comment when things are going especially well for my child" (causes problems) or "I write the parent a note when things are going well for the child" (helps). If the discussion is slow, facilitators can ask questions or give other examples from their own experiences.

- If you feel a participant has repeated a thought already on the list, ask if it is the same thing. If not, find out what he or she is trying to say and WRITE IT DOWN. Ask "probing" questions like: "Could you say that another way?" and follow with "Is this what you mean?"

- Pauses are okay. Don't jump in with suggestions; only make them if things really bog down.

- If people have real trouble identifying their own behaviors, its okay to let them discuss behaviors exhibited by other people they know, outside of the workshop, but still members of their respective groups.

- The number of groups for this activity is based on 30 participants (15 parents and 15 educators). Therefore, each group will have 7 or 8 members. If you have fewer than 30 or more than 30 participants you will want to structure your groups accordingly.

Keep in mind, though, that groups work best when they consist of anywhere from 5 to 8 members. You want to make sure your group is large enough to encourage many ideas, yet small enough so that people feel comfortable and have a chance to contribute. Determining the members of each group can be done by a simple random selection or by using any criteria you wish.

- Before participants move into groups, make sure they understand why they have been assigned to that specific group. (Was it through a random selection, or a chance to meet new people, etc.)

- If groups are meeting in different rooms, make sure people understand that this will help to ensure privacy and avoid disturbance.

- If you only have enough participants to make up one parent and one educator group, you will not need to include Activity 5 in your workshop. If you have more than 2 parent and 2 educator groups, Activity 5 might take a little longer since all groups will need time to report.

Take Note:

- This activity generates discussion and ideas that serve as the core for the rest of the day. It provides an opportunity for groups of parents and educators to identify and openly discuss (perhaps for the first time) things they do that inhibit or enhance better communication and cooperation. By doing this in homogeneous groups that are small enough for comfortable discussion, participants can share not only their behaviors, but the reasons for them. Also, by recording a type of specific behavior on a group list, individuals can be honest within their small group. Protective barriers can be broken down and ideas can remain fairly anonymous within the large group.

- While the major goal for the day is for parents and educators to identify and openly discuss common things they do that cause problems in communication, everyone needs reinforcement for their positive actions--this is why they will fill in the "Helps" list. Also, they can use their positive helpful behaviors to overcome some of the problems.

See pages A-8 and A-9 in the Appendix for sample responses.

TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #5

COMBINING CONCERNS

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE DISCUSSION LEADERS AND RECORDERS FOR EACH GROUP.

PARENT GROUP _____ EDUCATOR GROUP _____
DISCUSSION LEADER DISCUSSION LEADER

_____ _____
RECORDER RECORDER

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

FLIPCHARTS DEVELOPED IN ACTIVITY 4
MAGIC MARKERS
ADDITIONAL FLIPCHART PAPER FOR EACH GROUP
TAPE

SETTING THE STAGE

TWO PARENT GROUPS FORM ONE GROUP AND THE TWO EDUCATOR GROUPS JOIN TOGETHER. THE TWO GROUPS ARE SEATED APART FROM EACH OTHER TO ALLOW FOR OPTIMAL DISCUSSION AND MINIMAL DISTRACTION.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 6?

TIME: 20 Minutes

ACTIVITY 5: COMBINING CONCERNS

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO BRING PARENTS BACK TOGETHER IN ONE GROUP AND EDUCATORS IN ANOTHER. LISTS ARE COMBINED SO THAT EACH GROUP HAS ONE "CAUSES PROBLEMS" LIST AND ONE "HELPS" LIST.

In a Nutshell: Small groups of parents combine their lists of behaviors that cause problems and their lists that help communication. Small educator groups combine their lists. One "Causes Problems" list and one "Helps" list from each group will then be ready to present to the entire group for use in Activity 6.

How To Do It:

Steps

1. Have parent groups join together to form one large group. Combine educator groups into one large group. (Have each group work in separate rooms or different parts of one large room.)
2. Ask a member of one of the original small parent groups to begin describing the items on both lists prepared in his or her small group.
3. Ask a member of the other small parent group whether they had any of the same thoughts and ideas on their list and additional ones not mentioned.
4. Use one original list as a base and record any additional items prepared by the other small parent group that do not appear on the base list. (The idea here is to have one single statement of problems and one single statement of helping behaviors from parents.)
5. Use the same steps for the educator group.
6. In preparation for the next activity, ask for a volunteer who would be willing to serve as "spokesperson" for the group. Let the person know that while the volunteer will do the presenting, all members of the group will assist with clarification, if needed.

Training Tips:

- If you have two facilitators for each group, decide beforehand which one will conduct the discussion and which will serve as the recorder.

Take Note:

- This is the first time during the day that you will be asking for volunteers to present (or report) to the total group. Participants may not readily volunteer. Reassure people that the task is easy. Let them know that they only have to read their lists aloud and briefly clarify items if necessary. Tell them that you and members from the volunteer's group will lend support and add ideas if needed.

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #6

SHARING

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE TWO PEOPLE TO FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY.

PARENT _____ EDUCATOR _____

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

FLIPCHARTS DEVELOPED BY GROUPS IN ACTIVITY #5
TAPE

SETTING THE STAGE

TOTAL GROUP SEATED TOGETHER WITH LISTS DISPLAYED IN FRONT OF ROOM.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 7?

TIME: 30 Minutes

ACTIVITY 6: SHARING

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO GIVE PARENTS AND EDUCATORS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THINGS THEY DO THAT EITHER INHIBIT OR ENHANCE COOPERATION.

In a Nutshell: A spokesperson from each of the two groups presents the list prepared by his or her group to all workshop participants.

How To Do It:

Steps

1. Display both lists prepared by each group in Activity 5.
2. Ask the two spokespeople to decide which of them would like to start.
3. Ask one spokesperson to begin by reading and describing items on both lists produced by his or her group. Start with the "Causes Problems" list first.
4. Encourage other members from the spokesperson's group to clarify ideas if they wish. This provides support.
5. Before going on to the other group's list, ask if anyone has any additional questions or comments.
6. Ask the other spokesperson to read and describe the lists prepared by his or her group.

Training Tips:

- Be sensitive to speakers and provide support to their ideas when needed.
- Each idea on the charts should be clarified, explained, or examples given before inviting comments from the group at large.
- There will probably be some interesting comments after the lists are shared. This is an important part of the activity...let it flow.

Take Note:

- This is an opportunity for participants to hear what members from the "other" group feel and do that cause problems. For most people, this will be the first time they've heard parents or teachers "own up" to their actions. This activity, then, is really the highlight of the day and will be as exciting and enlightening to participants as it will be for you. You will certainly hear the "oohs" and "aahs" as parents hear teachers "admit" to things like "I feel intimidated by parents" or "I wish I had time to call, but I'm just overloaded." Educators, too, will be surprised to hear parents say things like "I don't praise the teacher enough" or "I don't contact the teacher as often as I should."

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #7

IDENTIFYING COMMON PROBLEMS

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE TWO PEOPLE TO LEAD DISCUSSION AND RECORD "COMMON CONCERNS."

_____ DISCUSSION LEADER

_____ RECORDER

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

LISTS DEVELOPED IN ACTIVITY 5, DISPLAYED IN FRONT OF ROOM
TAPE
MAGIC MARKERS
ADDITIONAL FLIPCHART PAPER WITH HEADING:

"COMMON THINGS WE DO OR FEEL THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION"

SETTING THE STAGE

TOTAL GROUP SEATED AT TABLES. BREAK FOR LUNCH AFTER THIS ACTIVITY. (REFER TO PLANNING SECTION, PAGE 3.)

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 8?

TIME: 30 Minutes

ACTIVITY 7: IDENTIFYING COMMON PROBLEMS

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO IDENTIFY CLEAR AREAS OF COMMON CONCERN; TO FOCUS ON AREAS WHERE BARRIERS EXIST TO COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION.

In a Nutshell: Facilitator records problems common to both groups on flipchart paper.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"I saw a lot of surprised looks and heads nodding during the last activity. It seems that we all share some similar feelings or do many of the same things that prevent us from working together in the most effective way. Let's take some time now to make up a new list that shows problem areas common to all of us."

Steps

1. Ask participants if there are any ideas on the "Causes Problems" lists that are common to both groups.

2. Record some of the common ideas or problems on a separate sheet entitled "Common Things We Do or Feel That Cause Problems in Communication." The group may wish to rephrase problems to clarify their similarities. Encourage participants to comment on the fact that parents and teachers really do have many of the same concerns.

3. Ask participants to briefly identify some common areas of cooperation that appear on their lists. (There is no need to record them on a separate list.)

4. Complete the activity by helping participants to gather their thoughts about the morning and "pull together" what they have learned. Questions like the following should be asked:

   - "Were you surprised at finding out that parents and educators do many of the same things that keep us from communicating effectively?"
   - "Do you have any new insights as a result of this activity? What are some?"

- "How might this help you now, in situations with parents and teachers?"

5 When discussion is over, review the afternoon's activities, and then break for lunch. Don't forget to remind people to return promptly at a designated time.

Training Tips:

- Have the "Cause Problems" lists from both groups displayed next to each other so participants can compare them more easily. Display the "Helps" list side-by-side.
- When describing the afternoon, do it enthusiastically so participants will feel excited about the rest of the day.
- Make sure people are clear about what will take place in the afternoon so they will see the importance of it. You want to give them a good reason to come back!

Take Note:

- Although participants became aware of commonality in behaviors and feelings during the previous activity, this understanding will be cemented by having people verbalize specific problems and by having them displayed in writing.
- This is the finale of the morning and the basis for further team-building in the afternoon. Your list of common problems will probably include statements like the following:
  - "We feel intimidated."
  - "We don't always make ourselves available when needed."
  - "We make inaccurate assumptions about the other person."
  - "We get defensive."

See Appendix A-10 for a sample list generated at a pilot workshop

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

TIME BREAKDOWN
DIRECTIONS: 5 MIN.
CASEWORK: 25 MIN.
BREAK: (IF TIME) 10 MIN.
REPORTING: 20 MIN.

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #8

PARENT AND EDUCATOR TEAMWORK

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE A PERSON TO INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

CHOOSE SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS.

GROUP 1 _____ GROUP 3 _____

GROUP 2 _____ GROUP 4 _____

GROUP 5 _____

CHOOSE ONE PERSON TO FACILITATE CASE STUDY REPORTS.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

CASE STUDY DISCUSSION GUIDES
PENCILS
FLIPCHART PAPER DISPLAYED INDICATING MEMBERS OF EACH GROUP

SETTING THE STAGE

FIVE GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS SEATED AT TABLES FOR SIX (3 PARENTS AND 3 EDUCATORS IN EACH GROUP).

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY ?

_____

After Lunch Transition

After such a long break, it will be necessary for a facilitator to reset the tone in preparation of the afternoon activities. Use whatever methods you know and feel comfortable with to help people feel relaxed and ready to go (a nice welcome, an amusing anecdote from lunch, etc.).

Quickly summarize the morning activities. Review major outcomes: parents and educators identified some of their own actions that prevent effective communication and found that many of these actions and feelings are common to both parents and educators.

Next, explain the focus of the afternoon activities and how they build on the experiences of the morning. Specifically, the afternoon activities provide an opportunity for parents and educators to work <u>together</u> in an effort to solve specific problems and develop plans for further collaboration.

<u>Note</u>: This transition can be led by the facilitator responsible for introducing Activity 8, and be incorporated into the introduction for the activity.

TIME: 60 Minutes

ACTIVITY 8: PRACTICING TEAMWORK

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS TO BUILD ON THEIR NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF EACH OTHER AND PRACTICE GOOD COMMUNICATION BY WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE EDUCATION OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD.

In a Nutshell: Small groups discuss hypothetical situations (case studies) and develop strategies for dealing with problems.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"For the next 30 minutes we will be working in small groups so that we can have a chance to work together, share ideas, and use some of what was learned in the morning. We'll be dealing with the kinds of problems that arise in the education of a handicapped child. The child you'll be discussing will be fictitious, but based on real problems." (Steps 1 through 8 should be explained before participants move into groups.)

Steps

1. Have participants divide into mixed groups of approximately 6 members each (3 parents and 3 educators per group).
2. Distribute case study guides.* (Each guide contains directions, 4 case studies, and a solutions sheet. Each study describes a situation that is causing a problem for a parent or a teacher, and is interfering with the child's education.)
3. Assign each group one case study to work on.
4. Ask each group to read their case study silently or choose someone in the group to read it aloud.

*Sample case studies follow this activity on pages 41-48.

5 After studies have been read, groups should:
- Review the facts;
- Determine the problems facing either the parent or teacher;
- Decide what factors are actually causing the problems;
- Discuss solutions, who should carry them out, and what resources might be needed to help.

6 Have group select a recorder to write ideas on the "solution" sheet.

7 After 30 minutes, ask a spokesperson from each group to report solutions to the total group by:
- summarizing the case study;
- identifying the problems;
- identifying possible causes for the problem;
- discussing the solutions they came up with.

8 When all cases have been covered ask the following questions:
- "Did it help to have input from both parents and teachers on finding solutions to the problems in your studies? Why?"
- "Would you do anything differently now as a result of this experience?"
- "Did parents and educators contribute equally in your group?"
- "What did you learn from the morning activities that helped you with this activity?"

Training Tips:
- Prepare flipchart paper in advance, indicating the names of the members of each group and the facilitator who will be assisting.
- When you're working with your small group, try to make sure everyone gets a chance to participate--to talk and be heard. To the quiet members of your group, ask questions like the following at times:
  - o "Mary, do you have any additional ideas?"

- "Joe, what do you think about this?"

Take Note:

- You may modify this activity by having each group working separately on the same case, so that in the end, participants can see that the same problem can be solved in a number of ways. If so, add this question to those you ask at the end: "Each group had a different solution to the same problem. What does this suggest to you?"

- You may want to have a 10 minute break before groups report back.

Sample responses to this activity can be found in Appendix A-11.

The accompanying case studies describe different situations. Choose those that are most appropriate, or develop your own. The "directions" and "solutions" sheets follow. To construct a case study guide, use the "directions" sheet as the cover, followed by the number of case studies you've chosen and end with the "solutions" sheet.

1201 16th Street N.W.
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Mr. Wilchek

Mr. Wilchek is becoming very concerned about his son, Jim. Jim is 13 years old and is in the 8th grade. While Jim spends most of the day with his friends in regular classes, he does visit the resource room two hours a week for extra help because of his learning disability. Lately, Jim has fallen further behind in many of his classes. Mr. Wilchek has given up tutoring him in the evenings in spelling, because as Mr. Wilchek has said, "We always end up angry at each other and Jim doesn't remember how to spell the words the next day, anyway." Lately, Jim has been complaining about going to the resource room because, as he puts it, "All the kids know that this is where the dummies go." What concerns Mr. Wilchek most, though, is that Jim is threatening to leave school as soon as he turns 16.

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Project Bridge

Linking Parents and Educators for Children with Handicaps

1201 16th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Mr. & Mrs. Akins

Mr. & Mrs. Akins have seven children. Three of them are in special education classes. Anton, the oldest, is 14 years old. He has been labeled trainable mentally retarded, and has been taking phenobarbital since the age of three to control his grand mal seizures.

Mr. Akins lost his job last year with the city government. At the same time, their only car was totalled by a hit and run driver when it was parked on the street. Mr. Akins has moved 300 miles to another state in search of work. He plans to send for his family when he is settled. Mrs. Akins has returned to work full-time. She uses public transportation which adds another three hours to her day.

Mrs. Akins has been noticing that the frequency of Anton's seizures have been increasing lately. Additionally, he seems to be "in a world of his own." It takes him a while to respond when he is asked to do something. While he had learned to care for himself fairly well (i.e. dressing, bathing, etc.), he has forgotten such things as how to button his shirt. Mrs. Akins is quite concerned. She has phoned Anton's teacher to arrange a meeting, but his teacher can only meet between 2:30 and 3:30 during the week. Because Mrs. Akins has just started her job, she is afraid to ask her boss for leave. Even if she could, she has no transportation to get her to the school. She is becoming frustrated, worried, and angry.

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Mrs. Hart

Mrs. Hart, a preschool teacher, has been very concerned about one of her new students, Juan. Although he's generally quiet in class, he doesn't seem to pay attention much and occasionally displays disruptive behavior by hitting other children. He rarely plays with them and seldom responds to Mrs. Hart when she asks him questions.

Mrs. Hart likes Juan and knows that being the "new kid in class" is hard. She has tried to talk to him a couple of times. She's become very frustrated though, because while he speaks a little bit of english, he never seems to understand what she is saying.

She decides to set up a meeting with Juan's mother and sends a note home in his lunch box. After two weeks, she still hasn't received a response. She doesn't know what to do so she decides to meet with her director to discuss the situation.

Her frustration has been increasing lately, as the director has been unavailable for a week and a half.

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Mrs. Day

Mrs. Day is a special education teacher at Bell Jr. High. She has been getting very frustrated lately, because while she would like to see parents more frequently, she is only able to meet with them once a year at the IEP meeting. All of her paperwork and lesson planning just barely allows her to schedule this one meeting with parents. What annoys her even further is that of "those parents who bother to show up at all," most are not prepared to participate. "They just sign the plan without question." She is tired of taking all of the responsibility and making all of the decisions.

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Mrs. Tippens

Mrs. Tippens teaches in a self-contained classroom setting at Rudolf Elementary. She has 15 educable mentally retarded students and is assisted by a part time aide who helps out for for only three hours a day. While she has been trying to work with her students on an individual basis during part of the day, she has given up; it is too difficult to work with one student and keep her eye on 14 others -- some of whom are behavior problems. She claims that she would be able to manage behaviors better if she had enough materials to go around and keep everyone busy. Her principal has told her that with the cut in funds, everyone has to suffer some. She loves teaching, but computer programming is beginning to sound more and more appealing to her.

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Project Bridge

Linking Parents and Educators for Children with Handicaps

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Mrs. Nelson

Mrs. Nelson has sole custody of her four grandchildren. Her 11 year old grandson, Joseph, has been labeled educable mentally retarded and hyperactive. He also has a severe speech impairment, and a curvature of the spine, which requires physical therapy. Joseph was recently transferred to the city's only special school so that he could receive the additional services that he needs -- speech and physical therapy. Unfortunately, Joseph now has to travel one hour on the bus each way. He is extremely tired and cranky when he returns home from school.

When Joseph started in his new program, Mrs. Nelson was hospitalized for a chronic health condition. She was recently told by her eldest granddaughter that rather than the 5 hours of speech therapy per week that Joseph was to receive, he is only getting one hour. He is not seeing the physical therapist at all. Mrs. Nelson is both alarmed and concerned. But she is bedridden and doesn't really know what to do.

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Mrs. Brannon

Mrs. Brannon has a 10 year old daughter, Trina. Trina has mild cerebral palsy, wears leg braces and uses Canadian crutches. Until now, Trina has attended a special school for physically handicapped children. Her teacher recommended that with part time physical therapy, Trina could easily handle a regular school placement. This Fall, Trina will be "mainstreamed" into her neighborhood elementary school in the 5th grade.

While Mrs. Brannon feels that Trina will benefit from this independence, she still has many concerns: she worries that Trina will be made fun of by her classmates; she is afraid that she may get knocked down in the halls and wonders if she'll be able to get around the building and up and down steps okay. Recently, she has heard that some parents in the community have already expressed negative attitudes about having handicapped children in the same classes as their own children. In addition, Trina said she doesn't want to leave her friends and has been anxious about going to a new school. Mrs. Brannon is having second thoughts about this new placement for Trina.

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Mrs. Rivera

Mrs. Rivera arrived in this country from El Salvador a year ago with her two children, Maria (age 8) and Roberto (age 11). She has several part-time jobs doing housecleaning and is taking evening ESL classes (English as a Second Language) at the local high school.

Maria and Roberto are enrolled in the neighborhood school. Until now, Mrs. Rivera thought that everything was going well. However, she just found out from Roberto that Maria has been in a new class for the past two weeks and that it's the one for "dumb kids".

Mrs. Rivera is quite surprised and upset to hear this, especially since Maria was such a good student back in El Salvador. She asks Maria why she has changed classrooms. Maria responds that she is not quite sure but that she was given some tests and was told that this new class would be best for her and she would be happier.

Mrs. Rivera wants to call the school to discuss this situation with her teacher. She's a little nervous and embarrassed, though, because she knows she will have to ask Roberto to be her interpreter.

Project Bridge is jointly sponsored by the Parents' Campaign for Handicapped Children and Youth and the Council for Exceptional Children.
A project funded by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Directions

1. Please first discuss the facts of this case and determine the problems that are interfering with the education of the student.

2. What are the issues that seem to have caused problems for the educator, parent, or student? (For example, issues related to school services, evaluation, personnel training, staff needs, transportation, attitudes of parents or teachers, lack of knowledge of community resources, etc.)

3. What things could be done to help solve the problems...

   a. What things could the educator do?

   b. What things could the parent(s) do?

   c. What could they do together?

4. What additional people, places, materials (resources) could assist in resolving the problem?

5. Use the "Solutions" sheet to record your responses.

Solutions

Title of Your Case _____

1. Problems Identified

2. Issues Causing Problems

3. Actions Needed to Help Solve Problems

Parent	Educator	Both

4. Additional Resources Needed

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

TIME BREAKDOWN
INSTRUCTION: 5 MIN.
DISCUSSION: 20 MIN.
REPORTING: 20 MIN.

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #9

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE ONE PERSON TO INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

CHOOSE SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS.

GROUP I _____ GROUP 3 _____

GROUP 2 _____ GROUP 4 _____

GROUP 5 _____

CHOOSE ONE PERSON TO FACILITATE REPORTS ON ACTION PLANS.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

PENCILS
MAGIC MARKERS
DISPLAY "COMMON PROBLEMS" LIST FROM ACTIVITY #7

FLIPCHART WITH HEADING: "GIVEN THIS MORNING'S DISCUSSION OF COMMON PROBLEMS, IF YOU DECIDED TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION IN YOUR BACK-HOME SITUATION, WHAT WOULD IT BE?"

HANDOUT: IDEAS FOR ACTION

SETTING THE STAGE

PARTICIPANTS CAN WORK IN THE SAME GROUPS AS IN ACTIVITY #8.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY 10?

_____

TIME: 45 Minutes

ACTIVITY 9: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO EXPLORE WAYS THAT PARTICIPANTS CAN BEGIN TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND EDUCATORS--BACK HOME, AFTER THIS WORKSHOP IS OVER.

In a Nutshell: Small groups discuss specific steps for a plan of action they might take in their communities to bring about increased collaboration between parents and educators.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"We've spent the day identifying things we sometimes do that cause problems in communicating with each other in the best way possible, and we've found that we share many of the same feelings. We have also had the opportunity to work together to solve problems and to find out how much more effective we can be when we combine our experience and skills.

In this last activity we will begin to explore ways we can take action to improve communication and cooperation--after we leave this workshop. We will again be working in small groups--so that we can draw on each other as resources."

Steps

1 Ask participants to consider this question: "Given this morning's discussion of common problems, if you decided to develop a plan to improve communcation and cooperation in your back-home situation, what would it be?"

2 Ask the groups to:

- Refer to the "Common Problems" list to choose a problem they would like to address. If they wish, they can deal with a new "concern" that has not been brought up.
- Develop an action plan, using the "Ideas for Action" handout* as a guide, that would help solve the problem in order to increase parent/educator collaboration.

*"Ideas for Action" handout follows this activity on page 55.

- Select group member to record plan on sheet.

3 A member from each group will report the plan to the total group.

Training Tips:

- To eliminate confusion, participants can work in same groups as in Activity 8.
- Explain that this is just an exercise in doing an action plan together. Therefore, participants shouldn't get "hung-up" on deciding which problem to address. They can use these same steps to work on a more personal issue after the workshop.
- Facilitators' involvement should be minimal in the small groups. However, be sensitive to "equal" participation and encourage input from the quieter members of the group.
- It would be helpful to:
  - Display the question asked in Step 1 on the flipchart.
  - Display the "Common Problems" list developed during Activity 7 where it can easily be seen by all participants.
- Again, keep track of the time and encourage participants to wrap things up about 5 minutes before the end of group work.

Take Note:

- This activity is the culmination of the workshop. Throughout the day, parents and educators have spent time identifying barriers to cooperation, realizing each other as being valuable resources, and experiencing the benefits of working together. Now, participants are developing specific steps they can take together, back home, to continue to develop this new relationship and to begin to make changes to improve services. Participants may reach this new level of awareness at different points during the day and may begin talking about future plans before you actually reach Activity 9 (maybe even after Activity 7). It's okay if this happens. Don't feel that participants are jumping ahead and going off track. Actually, it can help get Activity 9 off to a quicker start because people have already been thinking along these lines. Of course, you don't want this flow of ideas to completely

interrupt what you're doing; compliment speakers on their creative thoughts and assure them that there will be an opportunity in the afternoon to develop plans more thoroughly.

Sample responses to this activity can be found in Appendix A-12.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Here's what to do:

- Please review the list of "Common Problems" that came out of the morning activity.
- As a group, choose one of these problems or a different concern you would like to address.
- Using this problem, develop a plan that would help to solve it in order to improve cooperation between parents and educators in your school or community.

1. Our plan would be:

2. Following are steps necessary to carry out our plan and the people (parents, educators, administrators, etc.) whom we would ask to help carry out each step:

STEPS	PEOPLE

3. Additional resources and information that we might need to collect would be:

4. We would begin working on our plan:

   ____Tomorrow ____Next week ____Next month ____Next Fall ____Other

5. We would hope to see positive changes as a result of our plan within:

   ____A day ____A week ____A month ____A year ____Other

6. Some problems that might get in the way and strategies that could be used to overcome them would be: (Feel free to use an additional sheet of paper.)

PROBLEMS	STRATEGIES

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

TIME BREAKDOWN
INTRODUCTION: 5 MIN.
PERSONAL REFLECTION: I5 MIN.
INFORMAL SHARING
(OR CONTINUED THINKING): IO MIN.

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #IO

REFLECTING

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE A PERSON TO INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY.

_____
PARENT OR EDUCATOR

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

HANDOUT: "REFLECTIONS ON THE DAY"
PENCILS

SETTING THE STAGE

FACILITATOR CREATES A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. PARTICIPANTS MAY SIT WHERE THEY ARE MOST COMFORTABLE.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY FOR ACTIVITY II?

TIME: 30 Minutes

ACTIVITY IO: REFLECTING

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE? TO PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH SOME "PRIVATE TIME":

- TO REFLECT ON THE DAY;
- TO RELATE THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS TO THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES;
- TO THINK ABOUT WAYS THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

In a Nutshell: Participants, working alone, write down some of their thoughts about the day and verbally share them with others.

How To Do It: (You Might Begin With...)

"We all have had a very active day and have had a chance to listen to concerns and ideas expressed by others. We also have had the opportunity to solve problems and develop action plans drawing on each other's ideas and experiences. Now we'd like to give you some private time to think about the day and how it affected you. We have a handout with partial statements to help you guide your thoughts. Although we are asking that you complete the statements and write down your responses, please be assured that this is an individual exercise to be used for personal reflection.

We will set aside about ten minutes following this period to be used any way you wish. Some of you may want to talk to others about your thoughts; others may wish to use this time privately for additional thinking. We will take 15 minutes for each of you to gather your thoughts and write them down. After we hand out the sheets, please feel free to move anywhere in the room where you will feel relaxed."

Steps

1. Hand out "Reflections" sheets.*
2. Ask participants to fill them in.
3. After 15 minutes, ask participants if they would like to use additional time to reflect on their own--or to share thoughts with others. Let participants know that they may use this time any way they wish.

Training Tips:

- As you are explaining this activity, keep in mind that you are trying to set a relaxed tone and provide reassurance that it is a "private" activity. Be repetitive so that participants are convinced of the individual nature of the experience and feel safe to write down their personal thoughts.
- A relaxed atmosphere should be maintained during the 15 minutes reflection. All facilitators should be very quiet.

Take Note:

- You may want to suggest that participants voluntarily turn in their "Reflections" sheets. The responses will be positive and encouraging feedback regarding the impact of this day and your contribution toward its success. People really talk from their hearts and this sheet serves as a good form of evaluation. If you decide to ask for the sheets, though, please remember to tell participants that handing them in is optional so they don't feel like they're taking a test! Remind them that you don't want their names on these sheets.

See Appendix A-14 for sample comments by participants.

*A copy of the "Reflections" sheet follows this activity on page 59.

REFLECTIONS

In reflecting back on the day:

1. The most meaningful thing that happened for me today was:

2. My biggest surprise was:

3. What I can do in the future to use what I've learned today is:

4. The question I need to talk to people about is:

TOTAL TIME: 10 MINUTES

GETTING READY FOR ACTIVITY #II

WRAP-UP

FACILITATORS:

CHOOSE TWO PEOPLE TO CONCLUDE THE DAY.

PARENT _____ EDUCATOR _____

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

NONE

SETTING THE STAGE

PARTICIPANTS ARE SEATED IN TOTAL GROUP SETTING.

TIME: 10 Minutes

ACTIVITY II: WRAP-UP

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE?

- TO PROVIDE TIME FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE FEEDBACK.
- TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE FUTURE PLANS STIMULATED BY THIS WORKSHOP.
- TO BRING THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES TO A SATISFYING CONCLUSION.

In a Nutshell: Participants informally share their thoughts about the day.

How To Do It:

Steps

1. Ask group to be seated and begin by thanking everyone for attending the workshop.
2. Ask the group if anyone would like to share some final thoughts about the day.
3. Make any comments you would like concerning the workshop.

Take Note:

- This is also a good time to discuss follow-up ideas and plans. Participants may want to talk about such things as ways to keep in touch as a group, holding the workshop again for other groups of people, writing an article about the day for local papers or newsletters. Let these ideas flow along with suggestions for carrying out plans. A discussion like this can help everyone to feel that there is continuity to the day--that the workshop is just the beginning.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MATERIALS NEEDED
#1	None
#2	None
#3	Tape Magic Markers 1 Piece of Flipchart Paper Flipchart Heading: Workshop Goals: • To identify issues that cause barriers to communication and cooperation between parents and educators. • To discuss areas of common concerns in order to improve programs and services for children with handicaps. • To work together to develop ways to solve problems.
#4	Tape 4 Magic Markers 9 Pieces of Flipchart Paper 4 Flipcharts with Heading: Things I/We Do or Feel That Help Communication 4 Flipcharts with Heading: Things I/We Do or Feel that Cause Problems in Communication 1 Flipchart displayed with names of facilitators and members of each group
#5	Flipcharts developed in Activity #4 Additional Flipchart Paper Magic Markers Tape
#6	Flipcharts developed in Activity #5 Tape

WORKSHOP MATERIALS
AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	MATERIALS NEEDED
#7	Lists developed in Activity #5 Tape Magic Markers Additional Flipchart Paper with Heading: Common things we do or feel that cause problems in communication.
#8	Case Study Discussion Guides Pencils Flipchart paper displayed indicating members of each group
#9	Display Common Problems list from Activity #7 Flipchart with Heading: Given this morning's discussion of common problems, if you decided to develop a plan to improve communication and cooperation in your back home situation, what would it be? Handout: "Ideas for Action" Pencils
#10	Handout: "Reflections" Pencils
#11	None

GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS

Facilitating this type of workshop may be a new experience for you. You may wonder if you have the right qualifications. It may help you to know that people with different backgrounds and experiences have facilitated the workshop during the pilot phase. Each facilitator did things somewhat differently, contributing his or her own talent and style. In the same way, your unique qualities will blend to produce an effective and memorable Bridge workshop.

There is no content to learn in order to conduct the workshop successfully. The curriculum can be thought of as a script or a basic recipe. Read the ingredients, and then add your own style so that it feels right. The participants add the other important dimension. Your combined experiences and abilities produce a workshop that is unique and distinctive.

As a facilitator, your primary role is to promote a comfortable environment, encouraging people to share what they know and to listen to others. You guide the learning process, and the participants help manage it. This is a key concept in the design of the workshop. For when adults realize they are capable of self-direction in learning, their motivation to learn is greatly increased, as is their capacity to assimilate what is learned and to apply it to their own lives. Learners and facilitators become partners in the learning process and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

This section is included to provide you with a better understanding of what the workshop is all about and how it fits together, to give you some special things to keep in mind as you conduct the activities and to pass along some general tips on how to make the day run as smoothly as possible.

Specifically, this section will:

- Show how the eleven activities in the curriculum can be grouped together and seen as four interrelated units. Activities with a common theme become a unit and each unit builds upon the previous one.
- Outline some strategies for making sure that everything goes smoothly and efficiently.
- Help you feel ready to conduct the workshop.

ABOUT UNIT 1 (Activities 1, 2 and 3)

What Does This Unit Accomplish?

It helps everyone (parents, educators and facilitators) feel oriented to the day, what they will be doing and how they will be working together.

To be more specific, the activities in this unit:

- Set the tone of the day and begin to demonstrate parent/educator cooperation;
- Help participants to get to know each other in an informal and relaxed manner so they feel encouraged about working together;
- Give participants a clear understanding of what to expect and an opportunity to contribute their own ideas.

It all adds up to giving participants a positive sense of involvement...a feeling that they are an important part of an interesting day.

The Theme

The first chapter in a book, the opening scene in a movie, and the first activities in a workshop all have one thing in common: the audience is either drawn in or withdraws. How you start off your workshop and gear people up is very important to the rest of the day.

People enter situations like this one with three basic questions in their minds that must be addressed before they feel willing and ready to participate. They are:

1. What kind of meeting will this be--what are the ground rules?
2. Who am I in relation to everyone else?
3. What will be expected of us--whose meeting is this anyway?

Just about everyone asks these questions and so feels some uncertainty and anxiety at the beginning of a workshop. The activities in Unit I have been planned to address these concerns so that participants feel good about becoming involved in the rest of the day.

During Unit I, Keep in Mind:

- Do what <u>you</u> need to do beforehand to get relaxed. If you're somewhat nervous when you begin, share this with the group--they'll appreciate your honesty, and you'll appreciate their understanding.
- Remember to slow down. Don't hurry through directions...it's easy to run through them too quickly (especially if you're a little nervous). Take your time.

- Make sure the seating is comfortable, that people know the location of the restrooms and phone, the schedule for lunch and when the day is going to end.

- It's important that each facilitator have a chance to speak early in the day (to get the jitters out), even if it's only a quick introduction, an anecdote, etc. Also it helps the participants to know who's who.

- Be sure a parent and an educator share the job of facilitating these opening activities and continue to share responsibility (and demonstrate teamwork) throughout the day.

Options for Activity 2

If you think a lot of people already know each other and/or may prefer a different way of getting acquainted, consider this activity instead:

- Ask people to pair off (each team should consist of a parent and an educator) and complete the following sentence as part of their introduction to each other: "While I was coming to this workshop, I was thinking about (or was most concerned about)..."

- Then ask partners to introduce each other to the group and summarize what their partner said to them.

- This activity should take about the same amount of time as already noted in Activity 2.

ABOUT UNIT 2 (Activities, 4,5,6, and 7)

What Does This Unit Accomplish?

It helps participants to identify and agree upon barriers to cooperation between parents and educators.

To be more specific, the activities in this unit:

- Help participants to identify specific actions and feelings that block communication and cooperation;

- Help participants to be able to honestly express these actions and feelings to the group;

- Help participants come to realize that both parents and educators exhibit similar behaviors and share common feelings that interfere with cooperation;

- Provide participants with an opportunity to look at problem areas on which both groups would like to focus.

The Theme

Activities 4 through 7 are the heart of the workshop. During these activities, parents and educators become aware that they have much more in common then they thought. Many similar concerns and difficulties will appear on both lists. When participants see this, it's like making a new discovery--that the other group is actually made up of "people like me."

These activities may offer some participants their first chance to openly share feelings with peers or colleagues. A positive wish to solve problems flows from this experience.

In Activity 6, participants are given an opportunity to present their frustrations as a group. Individual needs are made public in a nonthreatening way, and participants see that issues can be resolved. They feel stimulated to put their energy into solving problems together for the benefit of handicapped children.

During Unit 2, Keep in Mind:

- Activity 4 is the first time during the workshop that participants are asked to work together in small groups. Some people are not used to this learning situation and everyone needs to know what to expect. Before they move into their groups, make sure everyone is clear on these four points:

  1. What is the task?
  2. Why they are in the groups to which they've been designated and why the groups are being separated.
  3. How much time they will have to complete the task.
  4. What kind of product they will produce (2 lists and an oral report by the end of Activity 6).

- Sometimes people hold back during the first small group activity of any workshop. Facilitators can encourage participation by displaying enthusiasm, humor, offering ideas, etc.

- Prior to the workshop, use flipchart paper to list the names of the members of each group, plus the facilitator for each group. Display it when giving instructions for Activity 4. That way, you won't have to constantly repeat who belongs to which group.

- Make sure groups are situated far enough apart (in different rooms, if possible). It will help them work without being disturbed and will also eliminate worry about being overheard.

- Activities 6 and 7 involve sharing and identifying common problems. You will want to clarify with your co-facilitator how to manage the details, so there's no confusion. For instance, you need to figure out in advance:

1. Who will hang the lists and where should they be located so everyone can read them? (Place both "cause problems" lists next to each other and both "helps" lists next to each other.)

2. Who will ask the group reporters to read their lists?

3. Who will ask the groups to identify common problems? Who will record them on the flipchart?

4. Who will ask the questions at the end of Activity 7?

5. Etc.

Lunch

Although not a formal part of the workshop, the kinds of things that happen during this time can effect participants' feelings about each other and the day. It's an important and useful component of the workshop.

This is a good time for facilitators to mix with participants and to check with other facilitators on roles for the afternoon.

Keep in Mind:

- Parent facilitators should make sure they mix with educator participants and vise versa.

- Because you've been assuming the role of a facilitator during the morning, participants may be hesitant about approaching you. You should take the initiative.

- Listen for feedback from participants but don't ask for it.

- Allow time to get together with other facilitators before lunch is over to share the feedback you've received and to see if there's anything you need to consider before the afternoon activities begin (like the heat really needs to be turned on).

ABOUT UNIT 3 (Activities 8 and 9)

What Does This Unit Accomplish?

It provides participants with opportunities to practice improving cooperation among parents and educators and to identify ways to continue these efforts after the workshop.

To be more specific, the activities in this unit:

- Provide an opportunity for participants to build on their new understandings by practicing cooperation in a specific situation;

- Help participants to identify ways parents and educators can improve cooperation after the workshop is over.

The Theme

Activities 8 and 9 are designed to move participants from problem identification to problem solving.

Activity 8 uses a simulated classroom situation. This gives participants a chance to work together (many for the first time) to solve problems free from the strains and stresses of the real thing. Participants should see the benefits gained by combining the ideas, perspectives and experiences of different people.

Activity 9 is designed to help participants take their first step toward improving cooperation in their own communities. Although participants may not be addressing their own personal concerns, this activity will help everyone acquire some new tools for identifying and addressing problems that arise.

During Unit 3, Keep in Mind:

- Activity 8 uses the case study approach. Some people may not be familiar with this approach and may need encouragement and very clear directions before getting started.

- Note that you are given an option about how to use the case material available to you (see page 39).

ABOUT UNIT 4 (Activities 10 and 11)

What Does This Unit Accomplish?

It provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on what they've learned and to think about how they might apply their insights in the future.

To be more specific, the activities in this unit:

- Help people relate the day's activities to their own experience;

- Provide an opportunity to discuss possible future steps;

- Bring the day's activities to a satisfying conclusion.

During Unit 4, Keep in Mind:

- That you and your co-facilitators have put in a great day's work and deserve all the praise and thanks you will be receiving!

GETTING OFF TO A SMOOTH START--SOME GENERAL TIPS

- Double check on all of the arrangements the day before the workshop:
  - Will the doors be unlocked?
  - Will the heat or air conditioning be turned on?
  - Will the food be delivered on time to the right place for the right amount of people?
  - Etc.
- Make sure all of your flipcharts are prepared ahead of time and placed in the room where you can find them easily. The following activities require that something be prepared on paper in advance: Activities 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9.
- Arrive about an hour before your participants are scheduled to come. Furniture generally needs to be rearranged to meet your needs. A table should be set up to distribute name tags and other materials you may want to give away (like a newsletter from your organization or a list of community resources).
- Prepare name tags in advance.

REHEARSING FOR THE WORKSHOP

All of the facilitators should plan on meeting a couple of times, a week or two before the workshop to determine roles, assign tasks and practice parts.

By the time you have your first meeting, everyone should have reviewed the curriculum, read this section and made additional notes, if necessary. Following is a suggested "script" for your rehearsal:

- Discuss the whole curriculum, generally, as a group. Talk about overall impressions, major concerns, or questions.
- Go through the curriculum, activity by activity. Discuss each activity carefully, making sure everyone understands what is involved. If the activity you are covering offers options for conducting it, discuss the options and choose one on which you all can agree.
- Before you move on to the next activity, decide among yourselves who will be the facilitator, and who will be the flipchart recorder. Determine your roles and jot down the appropriate names on the "Activity Overview" sheet for that activity.

- When you have finished going through the curriculum and have selected roles for each activity, spend some time talking to each other about how you can best work together.

  For instance:

  - How can facilitators be supportive of one another? When you're leading an activity, you may find you want to ask your co-facilitators for assistance. That's fine, but it's important to make it clear before the day of the workshop. This kind of flexibility is a good idea.

  - The same is true about give-and-take between facilitators while an activity is going on. If you've forgotten an important point, it's helpful for your co-facilitator(s) to add it when you're finished speaking. Talk this one over, too. Using a "code" phrase like "May I add something?" indicates to the speaker that you'd like to offer assistance. It eliminates any awkward surprises. Participants are unaware that something has been left out. Rather, they view it as another example of your excellent ability to work as a team!

  - Keeping track of time is important; the workshop needs to fit into a specific time period. It's usually easier if someone other than the person leading the activity keeps track and signals if the speaker is running too long. When small groups are working together, it often helps if one person assumes responsibility for reminding facilitators and participants to begin wrapping things up shortly before the end of an activity.

- Next, determine responsibility for completing the mechanical kinds of tasks:

  - Who will do the name tags?

  - Who will determine group members for the small group activities and decide where they should meet?

  - Who will prepare the flipcharts?

  - Who will bring the other materials (marking pens, tape, extra paper, handouts, etc.)?

- You may want to use your next meeting as the final rehearsal. Spend time with the people you will be working with in different activities to practice your "lines" and discuss new thoughts you may have about an activity. You can run through the entire workshop as a group if you wish. This is up to you and your other team members. Listen to each other's needs carefully. Some may want to do more rehearsing than others, and can get together in smaller groups.

On the day of the workshop, just remember: Relax, and have a good time doing it. If you're enjoying yourself, you can bet that participants are enjoying the experience too.

GLOSSARY FOR BRIDGE CURRICULUM

Action Plan - A structured approach to determine the steps needed to accomplish a future goal.

Brainstorming - A group problem-solving technique where all members are encouraged to spontaneously contribute ideas.

Case Studies - A hypothetical situation, based on real issues, providing opportunity for problem solving.

Facilitator - One who guides the learning process and helps others learn; explains activities, leads discussions, etc.

Feedback - A response to a statement which gives an opinion or makes a comment.

Flipchart Paper - Large sheets (pad) of newsprint paper (dimensions 33 1/2" x 27")

Goal - A specific aim or purpose to be achieved.

I.E.P. (Individualized Educational Plan) - A written plan designed for a specific handicapped child, developed jointly by that child's parents and educators. It defines the educational goals and the specific special education and related services needed to ensure an appropriate education. This plan is required by Federal Law under the provisions of Public Law 94-142.

Logistics - Certain arrangments that need to be made when planning for an event (location, food, transportation, etc.).

Recorder - Person who serves as the secretary for a group and transfers what is being discussed onto paper.

Spokesperson (Reporter) - Person who reports orally to the total group on the outcome of his or her group's discussion.

Team Building - Efforts to bring about a cooperative relationship between two divergent groups.

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(FACT SHEET)

Project Bridge

Linking Parents and Educators for Children with Handicaps

1201 16th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

A WORD ABOUT PROJECT BRIDGE

What is Project Bridge?

Project Bridge is an exciting new cooperative effort of parents and professionals--sponsored jointly by the Parents' Campaign for Handicapped Children and Youth and The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The project grew out of an increasing awareness that:

- The ultimate goal of education for children with handicaps--helping them to reach their fullest potential--is often blocked by communication barriers between parents and educators.
- Parents and educators each want what's best for the child, but such things as parents' sense of intimidation in dealing with professionals, or the near-overwhelming pressures felt by many teachers, too often result in a lack of give-and-take and cooperative action.
- In order to develop programs that are appropriate and responsive to individual needs, parents and educators must plan and work together as equal partners, each contributing his or her special knowledge and skills.

Two organizations sponsoring Project Bridge bring together the people we are trying to reach. The Parents' Campaign operates Closer Look--the well-known national information center for parents and children with disabilities. CEC is the foremost international professional association of special educators. Funding for the project has been provided under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

What Will We Do?

- We will develop a highly useable and easily replicated workshop designed to increase the ability of parents and educators to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.
- We will try out the workshop in several cities, making sure that techniques for encouraging open and fruitful communication really work, in different settings and with different groups.
- We will assist teams of educators and parents in each city to plan and conduct these trial workshops. Following each workshop, we will evaluate the effectiveness of our approaches and modify them as appropriate.

At each of the workshops, all of the work, from initial planning and recruitment through training and follow-up, will be shared equally by local parents and educators. Participants at each workshop will be a mix of parents and educators. Exchange of ideas and experiences at each workshop will focus on:

- identifying mutual concerns
- identifying major issues that cause conflict between parents and teachers
- identifying specific ways that parents and teachers can resolve conflicts and help each other help children.

What Will Be Accomplished?

Based on our knowledge gained at each location, a model workshop curriculum will be prepared for widespread distribution. We plan to produce how-to guides covering every aspect of production and leadership of Project Bridge workshops. Using these unique new tools, we will give assistance and encouragement to other groups in building strong links between parents and educators of handicapped children throughout the country.

(SAMPLE)

THE BRIDGE WORKSHOP

Registration Form--School Personnel

Date:

Time:

Place:

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Phone: Home _____ Business _____

Occupation: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Special Considerations (i.e., nonsmoking, interpreter, etc.):

_____

I will be able to attend _____

I will not be able to attend _____

(SAMPLE)

T H E B R I D G E W O R K S H O P

Registration Form--Parents

Date:

Time:

Place:

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Phone: Home _____ Business _____

Occupation: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Special Considerations (i.e., nonsmoking, interpreter, etc.):

_____

I will be able to attend _____

I will not be able to attend _____

(Sample Planning Committee Minutes)

PROJECT BRIDGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

The second planning meeting was held on February 10, 1982, at the Area I Office.

Members present:

Jane S.	Georgia B.
Bill D.	Tom B.
Ann H.	

Jane reported on the workshop site. She has visited with the principal at Bradley Elementary School. The amount for the use of the school will be given to her. Jane will complete the required form for using the building on March 27. Parking should be no problem. The school will not be able to provide lunch. Bill will be asked to check and make lunch arrangements.

Child Care. Four RVI students will be asked to provide baby sitting. The committee decided to pay the students instead of making a donation to the RVI program. Children presently in RVI Child Care Programs will be selected. A workshop will be provided for the babysitters on March 26. Georgia will check with her daughter and see if whe will do this.

Recruitment. The Recruitment Committee met and did an outstanding job of getting the process underway. Please refer to attached minutes, application forms, etc. This committee will select the participants. The Area I office will mail confirmations and a map to those chosen. Fifteen schools have been chosen--the principal will select one parent and one educator--parents and professionals who request to attend will be considered. Recruitment is also open to schools not on the list. Criteria for selection has been considered and will be determined at the next Recruitment Committee Meeting.

The following suggestions were given:

1. Look at persons who have difficulty communicating.
2. Recommendation of the principal.
3. Parent committed to attending and participating in the meeting.
4. Persons who request to participate.

Certificates will be presented to participants after the workshop.

Georgia will explore the possibility of doing a Bridge Workshop at the CEC Fall Conference in 1982.

Facilitators. There will be five,
2 parents, Jane and Bill
2 educators, Tom and Jane
1 general, Georgia

Publicity was discussed for after the workshop. It was suggested an article be done for the Conferation, Connection, a Public School paper, and Exceptional Parents Magazine. It was suggested that the Education Reporter with the "Constitution" be contacted.

It was suggested that all planners attend the workshop as observers, assist with food, babysitting, handouts, etc., as well as remain as evaluators for the project. This will be discussed and decisions made at the next meeting.

The five facilitators will meet prior to March 26. Jane will coordinate this meeting.

The next meeting for the entire Planning Committee will be March 17, 1982 at the Area I Office. It is imperative that all persons attend this meeting so finalized plans may be made prior to the workshop.

PROJECT BRIDGE WORKSHOP

SAMPLE AGENDA

8:30	- 9:00	Registration
9:00	- 10:00	Introductions
		Introductory Activity
10:00	- 10:50	Discussing Concerns
10:50	- 11:00	BREAK
11:00	- 12:00	Sharing Concerns: Are There Some That Are Common?
12:00	- 12:45	LUNCH
12:50	- 1:50	Finding Solutions Together: Case Studies
1:50	- 2:35	Where Do We Go From Here?
2:35	- 3:05	Reflecting on the Day
3:05	- 3:15	Wrap-Up

Your Input: How Can We Make This Workshop Better?

(Examples generated from previous workshop)

EDUCATORS

Things I/We Do or Feel That Cause Problems in Communication

1. Anxiety re: following legal written procedures creates barriers to really communicating
2. Don't want to hurt parents' feelings by being frank and honest about child's learning problems and level
3. Not enough time during day to have meaningful communication
4. Lack of time for parents to speak
5. No time to build rapport
6. Place of meetings can be a barrier (rarely meet on parents' turf) (We don't ask parents where/when to meet)
7. We make assumptions about parents (right & wrong) based on their background
8. Lack of understanding re: parents' ability to work with their children
9. We set goals for children without taking into account the family's life situation
10. Lack of communication between regular education and special education re: student
11. Not willing to recognize that we don't have the answer

(Examples generated from previous workshop)

PARENTS

Things I/We Do or Feel That Cause Problems in Communication

1. Express anger
2. Have unrealistic expectations
3. Sometimes have an overly demanding attitude
4. We are sometimes threatening
5. Sometimes have a defensive attitude
6. We are sometimes apathetic
7. We feel intimidated sometimes
8. We feel administrators aren't sensitive to individual needs of children and are more concerned with administration
9. We sometimes are overprotective of our children
10. Frustrated by feelings that we can't be candid
11. Sometimes feel isolated--only ones championing our child's cause
12. Misdirected communication; talk to the wrong person; complain, not following procedures or proper channels
13. We sometimes don't listen effectively
14. We don't maintain regular communication with educators
15. Denial of a problem
16. Terminology, jargon is a problem--we don't understand
17. We are not always prepared

(Examples generated in previous workshop)

Common Things We Do or Feel That Cause Problems in Communication

1. We sometimes allow personal feelings to interfere with the nature and frequency of our communication.
2. Sometimes there is a lack of openness in IEP conferences.
3. Parents and teachers are sometimes inaccessible to each other.
4. There is a lack of trust.
5. We sometimes fail to follow through on cooperative plans.
6. We fail to use each other as resources.
7. We fail to use outside agencies as resources.
8. We use jargon and don't say when we're not sure what the jargon means.
9. We sometimes approach things with a negative attitude or expectation.
10. Time constraints impair our communication and cooperation.

(Example from previous workshop)

CASE STUDY SOLUTIONS

Title of Your Case Mr. & Mrs. Akins

1. Problems Identified
   1. Transportation.
   2. Changing from dual parent to single parent home.
   3. Anton needs a psychological and medical examination.
   4. Conflict of teacher-parent conference schedule.
   5. Feelings of job insecruity.
   6. What resources (community support system) to use.
   7. Co-ordination of parents and teachers of other special children.

2. Issues Causing Problems
   1. Transportation.
   2. Financial support.
   3. Increase of frequency in seizures.
   4. Relapse in progress.

3. Actions Needed to Help Solve Problems

Parent	Educator	Both
1. Enlist aid of family or friends.	1. Meet her at a more convenient location (home visitation).	1. Seek another person to volunteer service (family, etc.)
2. Keep in contact with father.	2. a. Aid of older male image. b. Teacher counseling.	2. Seek aid of "big brother"
3. Request through school and local health department.	3. Refer for evaluation.	3. Make sure that evaluations are carried out.
4. Ask for time off.	4. Arrange different time or call boss for parents.	4. Make alternative schedules.
5. Make initial contact with employers.	5. Be of any assistance to parent.	5. Work together to find ways of resolving problem.
6. Ask what services are available.	6. Give parent a list services.	6. Find best systems for her need.

4. Additional Resources Needed
   1. PEP
   2. DFACS
   3. Community health center
   4. Psychological and social services of schools

(Sample ideas generated at workshops)

ACTION-PLANNING IDEAS

QUESTION: If we decided to develop a plan to improve communication and cooperation between parents and educators in our school or community, it would be:

1. To commit teachers in our school to start a parent/teacher communication system to insure that teachers, parents and students have adequate opportunity to communicate before placement.

2. To increase mutual involvement by parents and concerned citizens in school/community groups.

3. To improve parent/teacher communication at IEP conferences by providing information, checklists, focusing questionnaires, etc., prior to conferences.

4. Preparation of regular classroom teachers and students for accepting coping with an exceptional child.

5. To improve the concensus of the child's needs by developing a form for parent and teacher input that would "define" the problem or issue.

6. To assist all teachers to understand handicapping conditions.

7. To eliminate intimidation and lack of communication.

8. To increase the frequency of communication between teachers and parents.

9. To address the issue of "intimidation" by establishing communication early and on a regular basis.

10. Getting to know available resources and using them.

11. Develop methods to assure that parents have received complete information, sensitive or otherwise.

12. Design an awareness campaign so that parents are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and teachers and administrators participate more fully in the community.

13. Jointly develop a monthly newsletter.

14. Design and deliver a "mini-workshop" to improve the affective communication and cooperation between teachers and parents.

15. To increase the number of meetings and contacts (telephone, written) between parents and teachers in order to facilitate the parent's understanding of the IEP and their child's progress.

16. To broaden the level of communication between parents and teachers through such means as workshops, extra-curricular activities, more parent/teacher conferences and committees.

Certificate of Participation

This certifies that _____ has participated in a Project Bridge workshop given on _____ (DATE) in _____ (CITY). Project Bridge is part of a national effort to develop a model training program. Its goal is to increase collaboration between parents and educators for the benefit of handicapped children.

_____

LOCAL SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

_____ _____

PROJECT BRIDGE DIRECTOR
PARENTS' CAMPAIGN

CEC COORDINATOR

_____

PARENT RESOURCE SPECIALIST
PARENTS' CAMPAIGN

Project Bridge

Linking Parents and Educators for Children with Handicaps

Project Bridge is jointly sponsored by the Parents' Campaign for Handicapped Children and Youth and the Council for Exceptional Children.
A project funded by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Some Reflections on the Bridge Model Workshop: What Participants Said

The most meaningful thing that happened for me today was...

- I learned new ways to deal with old problems.
- understanding the teacher's side of the problems and knowing that other people are just as anxious as I.
- to find that special educators and parents of disabled students have a lot of the same concerns about communication. I do not feel as isolated in my concerns as I had.
- working together to generate alternatives, actions and feelings.

My biggest surprise was...

- that the activities kept me interested.
- everyone had some of the same apprehensions.
- how far we've come in parent-teacher relationships and how far we still have to go.
- how well-planned, informative and pleasant the workshop was--not boring at all!

What I can do in the future to use what I've learned today is...

- to keep a positive attitude and continually recognize that communication between parents and teachers is so vital to the development of the total child. I plan to use the program immediately in my classroom.
- to be open and non-hesitant in my response to school personnel. To promote parent support groups because teachers NEED us.
- be more sensitive to parent pressures/anxieties/feelings, and be realistic about how much time I have to do different things.
- before flying off the handle, find out everybody's responsibility for things that can and cannot be done.

What Facilitators and Planning Group Members Said After Participating in the Bridge Project

When I first decided (or was asked) to be a facilitator, my initial feelings were...

Parents said:

- Excitement to be involved in a new project.
- It looks like an interesting notion--worth a try.
- I felt it would be an opportunity to better understand professionals in the school system and to make contact with other parents. In the past this has been difficult.
- I had never done anything like this and was unsure of my ability.

Educators said:

- I'll try it, to help out.
- Concerned whether it would work out and excited about doing something new and interesting.
- Reluctance, caution, skepticism. What am I getting myself into now? As soon as we began meeting and working on the project, began to feel good about it. I saw a role for me. I liked the other committee members and that helped a lot.

When the workshop was over, I felt...

Parents said:

- Fantastic! It was excellent and I can't wait to repeat it.
- Remotivated. Advocacy is a frustrating process and workshops of this kind help recharge the batteries and remind people that examining each other's perspective is important.
- Good. I believe it was a positive experience for teachers and parents. Hopefully, workshops of this kind will be duplicated in other areas of the state.
- Happy to know that I could do this.

Educators said...

- Very positive about the curriculum being developed and its usefulness. Great about our planning team and facilitators.
- Relieved! Super pleased that so many participants found it worthwhile.
- Good. I love working on a team for a common cause. We did well and I felt proud of our work. I was moved by the bridge-building efforts of the parents and teachers during the process.

The most meaningful thing that happened to me was...

Parents said:

- I watched the process work. Teachers of different exceptionalities were even speaking to each other.
- The remotivation noted above. Like everyone else, I work, raise a family, and devote many hours to the "cause." The day-to-day process is sometimes exhausting and a break in the action, time to discuss, reflect, etc., was psychologically helpful.
- Meeting parents and professionals from the area.
- To know everyone had a better understanding.

Educators said:

- Meeting the wonderful parent facilitators.
- Working with the planning committee--they were really marvelous.
- The process--coming together with several unknown people, tussling over territory, working it out, and having it work!

My biggest surprise was...

Parents said:

- We finished on schedule.
- No big surprises, but some heightened awareness of needs of disabled kids with a disability different from mine. Also, awareness of some specific problems, i.e., staffing.
- The ease of conducting the workshop.
- How well the group worked together.

Educators said:

- The parents liked the workshop!!! The parents stayed and actively participated six hours and even lingered after the seminar to talk with the facilitators and Bridge staff.
- How well the final product (workshop) came off with what I would consider a minimum amount of planning, and the extra positive response by the participants--both parents and educators.
- How georgous the facility is!
- It has been too long since I have been here, and I learned that they (the museum folks) want special education kids and teachers/parents to visit, but that's not happening. We mainstream in school, but not in the community!

What I can do in the future to use what I've learned today is...

Parents said:

- Repeat the workshop and adapt it to accommodate all parents and teachers.
- Remember the need for periodic review, reflection and dialogue with people within the system. I can build that into the regular program of our parent association.
- I plan to use the workshop format and material with other groups.
- Talk to other parents about working together with educators for our children.

Educators said:

- Use some of the strategies learned today in other workshops. Involve parents directly in activities during workshop sessions.
- Change how IEP meetings are conducted.
- Remember how to work it through, to remember that deep down we all want the same thing, the <u>best</u> for the child. Just keep trying, keep talking, keep working.

If I could make a suggestion(s) that would help other facilitators conduct this workshop, it would be...

Parents said:

- Go with your instincts! Relax and enjoy it. If an exercise doesn't look like it will work with your group, don't use it or adapt it to your needs.

- No suggestions other than those raised before.

- Better prepare professionals for working with parent groups. The workshop should be conducted by parents without prior experience as well as professionals not traditionally involved in workshops.

- Work together and do all you can to help the participants understand what the workshop is all about.

Educators said:

- 1. Follow the instructions provided to the letter.
  2. Become familiar with your part and <u>believe</u> in what you are presenting and teaching.
  3. Constantly refer to the project goals.
  4. Have fun!

- On facilitator's Guide Sheet: include a space at bottom for who will be introducing next activity so smoothe transition can occur.

- Creature comforts at workshop very important--site should be conducive to positive attitudes right from start.

- Explicit meeting notes should be sent to all involved in steering committee.

- Workshop facilitators should role play several sessions as part of training--workhsop package could include some examples of the "worst" possible problems that could arise as means to prepare facilitators.

- 1. Pick seven perfect people to plan and facilitate.
  2. Have 30 caring, giving participants.
  3. Remember you're doing it for the kids.
  4. And don't forget the bagels.